

The Wanderers must 'keep their cool' in sunny Italy

MID-WEEK'S off to Italy! On Friday sports editor Stuart Earp pictured alongside, joins the Wycombe Wanderers tourists for their trip to play Pistoiese and Teramo in the return matches of the Anglo-Italian Inter-League Semi-Professional Tournament.

Wanderers leave Loakes Park by coach on Friday evening for Heathrow and fly out to Milan at 8.35 p.m. First match is against Pistoiese on Saturday and the players then have a break before the Teramo game on Wednesday. Mid-week football fans will have on the spot reports on the games from Stuart Earp plus pictures and features when he returns.

Let me fill you in on the set-up of the competition. Six clubs from each country were invited to compete — Wycombe, Enfield, Wimbledon, Nuneaton, Stafford Rangers and Scarborough from England and Monza, Teramo, Pistoiese, Benevento, Udinese and Siracusa from Italy. The clubs were split into three sections and play each other on a home and away basis. The club from each country with the best record goes through to the final on Sunday, June 20.

Three points are awarded for a win and one for a draw and if clubs finish level on points, goal difference will decide. If still level, the greater number of goals scored will count and after that, the greater number of goals scored away from home.

The matches in England have already been played and the situation is this: Three English clubs — Wycombe, Wimbledon and Nuneaton won both games for six points. Scarborough have four points, Stafford three and Enfield two. Wimbledon top the table as they scored seven goals while Wanderers scored five and Nuneaton 4. Here are the tables:

ANGLO-ITALIAN INTER-LEAGUE
SEMI-PROFESSIONAL TOURNAMENT
Tables after Two Matches

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wimbledon	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Wycombe Wanderers	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Nuneaton	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Scarborough	2	1	1	0	4	0	4
Stafford Rangers	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Enfield	2	0	2	0	1	1	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monza	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Teramo	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Pistoiese	2	0	1	1	1	5	1
Benevento	2	0	0	2	0	6	0
Udinese	2	0	0	2	2	7	0
Siracusa	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

So what are Wycombe's chances of reaching the final of this prestigious competition? With two wins from the home matches, the Blues must be confident of a good showing on Italian soil. Pistoiese were well beaten when they visited Loakes Park on May 4, crashing to a 4-0 defeat. John Delaney, Dylan Evans, Terry Reardon and Dave Alexander got the goals.



Teramo were a more difficult kettle of fish. By various means, some not in accordance with the rules, they gave the Blues quite a headache, but in the end Evans' 20th minute goal was enough.

Wanderers therefore go to Italy with a 100 per cent record so far. But they know only too well that their task away from home will be doubly difficult. And they know it from past experience.

Last season Wycombe met A.C. Monza in another Anglo-Italian competition and in the first leg at Monza they were given a real lesson in the finer arts of the game by the Italians. They went down 1-0, a particularly good result, and took the return leg 2-0 to win 2-1 on aggregate. Wanderers expect both Pistoiese and Teramo to turn on the heat at home.

Wanderers' biggest challengers are Wimbledon. Their opponents, Benevento and Siracusa, seem to be the weakest teams in the competition and two good wins for the 'Dons' could see them through to the final. Wycombe know how efficient they are too — they played them in a friendly at Bisham Abbey last night (Monday) as a final preparation for the tour.

One thing could count against Wimbledon, however, their temperament. Already in the home matches, there has been a good deal of disciplinary trouble and Wimbledon might well find the Italian tactics away from home a little too much to take. Any retaliation could lead to dismissals. Every one of the English teams must be apprehensive about the Italian tactics.

At Loakes Park some of the Wycombe players were mercilessly chopped down and both Pistoiese and Teramo had a player booked. Much will depend on the Italian officials, but it wouldn't surprise me to see a fair bit of trouble on the field. Wycombe are better equipped than most to deal with the situation. In the last three years only six players have been booked in Isthmian League matches. Manager Brian Lee, who retires at the end of the tour after eight glorious seasons, will have drummed into his players the need 'to keep their cool.'

All the players have been instructed to keep up their fitness. But they will have plenty of opportunity to enjoy themselves in between the two (or possibly three) matches.

It will be interesting to take a look at the newcomers in the squad. Two Carnegie College students are included, one of whom has signed on for the Blues next season — left back Bobby Davis. Steve Perrin, who joined Crystal Palace last term, is also in the squad as a guest and will do much to fill the gap left by Tony Horseman's absence. 'Bodger' was unable to make the tour this year.

The tourists arrive back on Monday, June 21. Don't forget to buy your copies of 'Mid-week' and the 'Free Press' for full reports of the tour.